



STAFF PHOTOS/CASEY MESERVE

A group of fishermen led by Thomas Taylor, at the lectern, have asked selectmen to establish a commercial shellfishing program in Kingston Bay, similar to the one operating in Duxbury Bay. There are several hurdles to complete before one could be established, including a survey of the proposed site by the state Division of Marine Fisheries.

## Aquaculture plan goes to the state

Fishermen look  
to follow  
Duxbury's lead

**The town needs the approval of the state Division of Marine Fisheries to go forward with issuing commercial licenses. The state would survey the bay and tell the town where commercial farms could be placed.**



KINGSTON — Shellfishing is big business for oysterman Skip Bennett, of Duxbury.

"I'm an aquaculture junkie," the owner of Island Creek Oysters said. He has been harvesting oysters commercially in Duxbury Bay for 15 years. "I could go on and on about the positive impact of aquaculture."

-It helps clean nitrogen and sediments out of seawater, shellfish create more oxygen, they bring in rare species like eelgrass, and farmers like Bennett can make a living from it, which he said, benefits the town.

That's why a group of Kingston fishermen has asked the Board of Selectmen to consider opening part of Kingston Bay to commercial aquaculture.

Currently, Kingston only allows residents to purchase shellfish licenses and clam on a small scale, for their own enjoyment. A few years ago, the town began seeding the bay with cherrystones and other mollusks for that reason.

Duxbury has offered commercial licenses for 15 years, according to Bennett, and 15 commercial farms cover about 30 acres of Duxbury Bay.

The town needs the approval of the state Division of Marine Fisheries to go forward with issuing commercial licenses. The state would survey the bay and tell the town where commercial farms could be placed.

There are problems, however, including conflict between public shellfishing and private farms. Giving a farmer a license would prevent anyone else from shellfishing on that area.

Selectman Jean Landis Naumann was concerned about revenues to the town.

"The revenues from licensing are very minimal," Bill Walton, of the Southeastern Massachusetts Agriculture Center, said. "The state only allows you to charge between \$5 and \$25 an acre. Basically, it's a processing fee."

He did say that most towns require licensees to be residents, which means they will pay the town taxes on their businesses and will put money in the local economy.

With Walton, Bennett and other shellfishing professionals offering the positives of the plan, the selectmen were convinced to put this to the state.

But not everyone was convinced.

Reggie Macamoux, a former shellfish constable, asked the selectmen to speak about the problems with the plan, claiming he was there on behalf of Harbormaster Frank Catani.

The main concerns were money — seeding the bay costs the town \$2,000 a year, and in the past six years, shellfish licenses have generated more than \$37,000 for the town.

The town would not receive that from two or three commercial licenses, and the cost would go up, Macamoux argued. The town would have to employ the harbormaster throughout the year, not just

from April to November, as he is currently.

Another problem is where to place farms.

"You can't issue commercial licenses on acres that have already been seeded," Macamoux said. He said all of Kingston Bay has been seeded. Also, he said, farms cannot place new species of shellfish on bottoms that are home to other species.

Macamoux said the area approved for shellfishing is too small to handle commercial farms and still provide the amateur shellfishermen with space to clam — 133 acres as opposed to Duxbury's 4,600 acres open to shellfishing.

But the selectmen chose to go forward, unanimously approving the plan to learn from the state whether the plan is feasible.



Reggie Macamoux, a former shellfish constable for Kingston, outlined the reasons why commercial shellfishing in Kingston Bay is impossible, including, he said, the fact that the entire bay was seeded by the town. The Division of Marine Fisheries does not allow aquaculture in acres previously seeded by the town.